



# Women and Minority Veterans Quarterly Newsletter

January - February 2009

## A Message from Deputy Secretary Barbara Ward



As a new member of the Advisory Committee on Women Veterans, I will be attending the committee's first meeting in Washington, DC in February. This is a very exciting time and an opportunity to represent California's women veterans. In future newsletters, I will provide brief updates on the committee's plans and actions.

continued on next page

## CalVet and Army Reserves Sign Memorandum of Understanding to Encourage Soldiers to Pursue Jobs with Employer Partners

Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Tom Johnson and Maj. General Bruce Casella, US Army Reserve, signed a memorandum of understanding between CalVet and the Army Reserve on January 14, 2009 to encourage professional and high quality employees to enlist in the Army Reserve and encourage Army Reserve and active duty US Army soldiers to pursue careers with Reserve employer partners.



"We are very pleased to be signing this Memorandum of Agreement with the Army Reserve today," said Johnson. "One of our statutory responsibilities is to give preference to veterans for employment within the California Department of Veterans Affairs whenever possible. This memorandum will reinforce our commitment to hire veterans."

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## **A Message from Deputy Secretary Barbara Ward cont:**

**This year's CalVet Women Veterans Conference will take place September 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>.** We are currently in the final selection phase of our Los Angeles airport hotel location. Please hold these dates open for our 2-day conference, which will be full of surprises and valuable information. The conference format will be similar to that of the 2008 conference and will incorporate many of the suggestions made via the evaluation process. This year's 2-day conference will allow conference participants to attend all afternoon breakout workshop sessions and we will recognize women veterans at a banquet dinner.

Now is the perfect time to start thinking of individuals whom you feel deserve recognition for their contributions to the veterans community. If you have an interest in volunteering your time and talents to make the 2009 conference a success, please send me an email ([Barbara.ward@cdva.ca.gov](mailto:Barbara.ward@cdva.ca.gov)).

Additionally, we are seeking conference donations and sponsors and would welcome your assistance in this area.

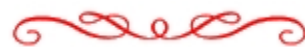
I was a lucky recipient of a free Inaugural ticket from Senator Diane Feinstein's office. During my visit to Washington DC to attend the Presidential Inauguration, I had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Irene Trowell-Harris, Director of the Center for Women Veterans and Lucretia McClenney, Director of the Center for Minority Veterans. These meetings provided me with a current status report on both centers, as well as some of their future plans.

Please enjoy several photos of this memorable Inauguration as you browse through the newsletter.

Many of you completed a Women Veterans Survey, developed by the California Commission on the Status of Women, at the 2008 CalVet Women Veterans Conference. The draft survey results are currently being reviewed and should be finalized within the next 60 days. Some of the preliminary findings were recently shared during my interview with representatives from the General Accounting Office in preparation for their site visits to the following USDVA medical centers: San Diego, Long Beach and Palo Alto. Our outreach efforts continue to both women and minority veterans in ensuring that they utilize their earned benefits. Please remember that women veterans can access our special dedicated line to receive assistance by calling: 916-653-2551. Although this line is dedicated to providing assistance to women veterans, all veterans may utilize this phone resource as well. As the USDVA and many other veteran organizations are making preparations for Women Military History week in March, I look forward to participating in several of their events and activities and look forward to meeting more of our women and minority veterans and serving all veterans and their families. To all veterans, I say, Thank You for Your Service!

**Barbara Ward**

*Deputy Secretary for Women and Minority Veterans Affairs*



# Woman Veteran Meets Cher

By Lillarose Bangs

The concert was an experience of a life time, one my daughter and I will never forget. Not only was the show awesome but the meet and greet went extremely well. When we walked in, and before we could say anything, Cher said loudly and with a lot of enthusiasm “You are the guest from my sister,” and gave us really big hugs. My daughter and I were beside ourselves at that point. We were really impressed. My daughter whispered “Mom, she knew who we were before anyone said anything, now that’s special.” My daughter and I bought shirts at the show so we could try to get them autographed by Cher, who said she wanted to autograph them properly and had us wait until she was done with the meet and greet. She then took us back to her dressing room to sign the shirts. As an added bonus, Cher gave us different t-shirts each and an autographed program that she personalized to me and Kirstin. This was way more than we expected. All her staff was wonderful and we got to meet Ebar and Nick. Everyone treated us really nice and made us feel so special. Again, thank you, thank you, for this was awesomely wonderful.

*Lillarose Bangs is active in the reserves, married, and the mother of twins, a boy and a girl. Lillarose was the lucky recipient of the tickets to a Cher concert during the 2008 CalVet Women Veterans Conference.*





## **POWERPATHWAY(tm) CAN HELP YOU COMPETE FOR HIGH- DEMAND ENERGY SECTOR JOBS.**

PG&E is one of the nation's largest gas and electric utilities and is based in California. PG&E's PowerPathway -- a best practice workforce development program -- is collaborating with community colleges, workforce investment boards, labor, government, and industry partners to systematically prepare individuals for energy sector positions.

### **TWO POWERPATHWAY PROGRAMS ARE TAKING APPLICATIONS NOW:**

- 1) City College of San Francisco "Bridge to Utility Worker" program (limited to veterans\*). Starts in April 2009.
- 2) American River College in Sacramento "Bridge to Utility Worker" program (open to everyone). Starts in April 2009.

Each program runs 10-12 weeks.

### **HOW TO APPLY?**

To apply, please complete the application at

[www.pge.com/about/careers/powerpathway/jobseekers/courseinterest/](http://www.pge.com/about/careers/powerpathway/jobseekers/courseinterest/). You will be contacted only if your application is selected for further consideration.

To learn more on the program, visit [www.pge.com/careers/powerpathway](http://www.pge.com/careers/powerpathway).

To read about veterans who currently work at PG&E, visit [www.pge.com/about/careers/powerpathway/jobseekers/veterans/](http://www.pge.com/about/careers/powerpathway/jobseekers/veterans/).

### **ARE YOU QUALIFIED?**

Applications for the CCSF program is limited to veterans who fit the following profile:

- You are a vet discharged after 4/1/05.
- Your pay grade was E3 or above and you were honorably discharged.
- You have electronics/electrical and/or construction experience.
- You are mechanically and technically inclined and like to work outdoors.
- You are comfortable with physically demanding work.
- You are willing to be mobile within California.
- You can pass a drug test and background check to even be considered for the program.

## **Seeking Art Submissions by Female Veterans and Active Duty**

We will be accepting pieces for a multi media gallery show through Feb. 28th for our March 2009 event celebrating women who have served.

Sponsored by:  
The Iraq Veteran  
Project of Swords to  
Plowshares

Please contact Tia Christopher (tchristopher@stp-sf.org)  
or Olivia Colt (ocolt@stp-sf.org)  
415.252.4788 | [www.stp-sf.org](http://www.stp-sf.org)

## Wanted – Marketing Associate for Women's Addiction Treatment Center in Greenbrae, CA

*Marin Services for Women, an addiction treatment center for women, seeks marketing genius.*

OK, that may overstate it just a bit, but the truth is we have a crucial position open. This newly created position will lead our marketing efforts and provide outreach to potential clients, particularly veterans in need of addiction treatment and job readiness development to succeed in the civilian workforce.

Marin Services for Women has been treating women with substance abuse since 1978.

Please send resume with a cover letter that tells us what makes you the person we're looking for! Feel free to contact me in you need additional information regarding this position.



Vicki Marti, M.A.  
Director of Programs  
Marin Services for Women  
[vmarti@mswinc.org](mailto:vmarti@mswinc.org)  
(415) 924-5995 ext.14 (office)  
(415) 215-3884 (cell)



### THE SOLDIERS PROJECT

*FREE, CONFIDENTIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING FOR SOLDIERS AND THEIR FAMILLIES*

**FEBRUARY 15, 2009**

**9:00 AM – 4:00 PM**

**Antioch University**

**A SPECIAL ALL-DAY WORKSHOP WITH HARRIET KATZ ZEINER, PH.D**

*VA Palo Alto Health Care System*

**PSYCHOLOGICAL TREATMENT FOR MILITARY SERVICE MEMBERS WITH NEUROLOGICAL INJURIES (TBI)**

**Registration: \$100 (tax deductible)**

*Attendees are eligible for 6 CME/CEU units*

**Register at: [www.thesoldiersproject.org](http://www.thesoldiersproject.org)**

*For more information or to register contact Judith Broder, MD at 818-761-7438.*



**Veterans: You may be eligible for a 30-Year Home Loan.**

**Contact CalVet at 866-653-2510 or visit [www.calvet.ca.gov/calvetloans](http://www.calvet.ca.gov/calvetloans) for more information.**



# INAUGURATION OF PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA



*Photo taken from Boston.com.*



*Photo taken from Boston.com.*



*Barbara Ward, Deputy Secretary for Women and Minority Veterans waits to obtain an inaugural ticket.*



*Photo submitted by Barbara Ward, Deputy Secretary for Women and Minority Veterans Affairs*

# MEET FIRST LADY MICHELLE OBAMA

## *“Advocate for Military Families”*

When people ask Michelle Obama to describe herself, she doesn't hesitate. First and foremost, she is Malia and Sasha's mom.

But before she was a mother — or a wife, lawyer, or public servant — she was Fraser and Marian Robinson's daughter.

The Robinsons lived in a brick bungalow on the South Side of Chicago. Fraser was a pump operator for the Chicago Water

Department, and despite being diagnosed with multiple sclerosis at a young age, he hardly ever missed a day of work. Marian stayed home to raise Michelle and her brother, Craig, skillfully managing a busy household filled with love, laughter, and important life lessons.

A product of Chicago public schools, Michelle studied sociology and African-American studies at Princeton University. After graduating from Harvard Law School in 1988, she joined the Chicago law firm Sidley & Austin, where she later met the man who would become the love of her life.

After a few years, Michelle decided her true calling lay in encouraging people to serve their communities and their neighbors. She served as assistant commissioner of planning and development in Chicago's City Hall before becoming the founding executive director of the Chicago chapter of Public Allies, an AmeriCorps program that prepares youth for public service.

In 1996, Michelle joined the University of Chicago with a vision of bringing campus and community together. As associate dean of student services, she developed the university's first community service program, and under her leadership as vice president of community and external affairs for the University of Chicago Medical Center, volunteerism skyrocketed.

As First Lady, Michelle Obama looks forward to continuing her work on the issues close to her heart — supporting military families, helping working women balance career and family, and encouraging national service. *Look for updates on the First Lady's work with military families in future newsletter issues.*

Michelle and Barack Obama have two daughters: Malia, 10, and Sasha, 7. Like their mother, the girls were born on the South Side of Chicago.

[www.whitehouse.gov/administration/michelle\\_obama](http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/michelle_obama)





# 'Entrepreneurship Boot camp for Veterans with Disabilities

The 'Entrepreneurship Boot camp for Veterans with Disabilities' (EBV) offers cutting edge, experiential training in entrepreneurship and small business management to soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines disabled as a result of their service supporting operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. The intent of the EBV is to open the door to entrepreneurial opportunity and small business ownership to you, by developing your competencies in the many steps and activities associated with creating and sustaining an entrepreneurial venture, and also by helping you coordinate your efforts with programs and services for veterans and others with disabilities.

The EBV was first introduced by the Whitman School of Management at Syracuse University in 2007. In 2008, the EBV Consortium of Schools was launched, a national partnership with UCLA Anderson School of Management, Florida State University's College of Business, and Mays Business School at Texas A&M. Each of these world-class business schools offered EBV on their campuses in summer 2008. The Krannert School of Management at Purdue University also joined the EBV consortium, and all five schools will offer the EBV on their campuses in summer 2009.

Like the boot camp you know, this program is intense, rigorous, and challenging. Building upon key elements of SU's nationally ranked entrepreneurship curriculum, the boot camp consists of a series of training modules designed to assist you in growing businesses successfully and profitably. A team of experienced faculty and successful entrepreneurs will work with you, providing a fun, interactive, and informative experience. They will introduce entrepreneurship ideas and concepts, and show how to apply them to your current or potential business. The EBV program is offered entirely free to qualified veterans accepted into the program.

Applications are accepted from veterans who meet the following criteria:

- 1) a service-connected disability as designated by the Veterans Administration or Department of Defense,
- 2) military service after September 2001, and
- 3) a passion for entrepreneurship.

This program is entirely without cost to the veteran, including travel, lodging, meals, and all program costs.

Application Procedures are available at [www.whitman.syr.edu/ebv/apply.asp](http://www.whitman.syr.edu/ebv/apply.asp).

Successful candidates for admission will demonstrate a strong interest in entrepreneurship, high motivation for owning and managing a business, and a high likelihood of successful completion of this intense training program.

For specific application requirements, visit [www.whitman.syr.edu/ebv](http://www.whitman.syr.edu/ebv) or apply online at [www.whitman.syr.edu/ebv/Apply](http://www.whitman.syr.edu/ebv/Apply).

For more information contact:

**Ellie O'Neill**  
EBV Program Coordinator  
Phone: 315-443-6007  
E-mail: [ebvinfo@syr.edu](mailto:ebvinfo@syr.edu)

**Mike Haynie, PhD**  
Founding Director, EBV  
Phone: (315) 443-3392  
Email: [jmhaynie@syr.edu](mailto:jmhaynie@syr.edu)

**Whitman School of Management**  
721 University Avenue, Suite 415  
Syracuse, NY 13244-2450



## **Nearly 11,000 Survivors to Receive Retroactive Payments**

### **Search for Other Eligible Survivors Continues**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) has identified nearly 11,000 surviving spouses of deceased veterans who will receive a lump-sum payment to correct an error in their USDVA benefits. Also documented were more than 73,000 who had been previously paid. USDVA officials are still tracking down eligible survivors.

"I hope that any surviving spouses of veterans living in California who think they qualify for these payments take advantage of this situation and apply for one of these payments," said Tom Johnson, California Secretary of Veterans Affairs. "Receiving these payments will come in handy, especially given the current financial situation many Americans are experiencing during these troubled times."

Payments will be released to these survivors beginning on Dec. 29. The total value of the payments is about \$24 million.

At issue is a 1996 federal law that makes a surviving spouse eligible to receive the veteran's USDVA compensation or pension benefit for the month of the veteran's death. USDVA failed to properly implement that law in all cases.

Most likely to have been affected by this problem are surviving spouses who never applied for USDVA survivors' benefits following the death of a veteran. Eligible for the payment are surviving spouses of veterans who died after Dec. 31, 1996. The Department doesn't have current addresses for many of them, which makes the process of contacting them difficult.

USDVA has established a special Survivor Call Center (1-800-749-8387) for spouses who believe they may be eligible for this retroactive benefit. The Call Center is open Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Central Standard Time. Inquiries may also be submitted through the Internet at <http://www.vba.va.gov/survivorsbenefit.htm>.

## **WEBSITES OF INTEREST TO MINORITY VETERANS**

American GI Forum, California -- <http://www.agif.org/>

CA Department of Veterans Affairs -- [www.calvet.ca.gov](http://www.calvet.ca.gov)

U.S. Department of Defense -- [www.defenselink.mil/faq/pis/mil\\_strength.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/faq/pis/mil_strength.html)

Asian Pacific American Organizations -- <http://www.apanational.org/>

Center for Minority Veterans -- <http://www1.va.gov/centerforminorityveterans/>

Buffalo Soldiers -- [www.buffalosoldiers.com](http://www.buffalosoldiers.com)

Military OneSource -- [www.militaryonesource.com](http://www.militaryonesource.com)

National Native American Veterans Association -- [www.nnava.org](http://www.nnava.org)

VA Benefits for Veterans of Enduring Freedom / Iraqi Freedom -- [www.vba.va.gov/EFIF](http://www.vba.va.gov/EFIF)

Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. -- [www.tuskegeearmen.org](http://www.tuskegeearmen.org)

State Veterans Homes -- [www.nasvh.org](http://www.nasvh.org)

**US Department of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Health Administration  
Minority Veterans Program  
Coordinators**

**Sam Maze**, J.L. Pettis VA Medical Center  
(909) 583-6848

**Robert Valdez**, Los Angeles VA Medical Center  
(310) 268-3526

**Paul Burton**, Greater Los Angeles Health Care  
System (818) 895-9596

**Irene Wellington**, Mather VA Health Care  
System (916) 366-5343

**Charlie Lonan**, VA Long Beach Health Care  
System (562) 826-5405

**Johnny Lewis**, San Diego VA Medical Center  
(858) 642-3306

**Lynn Hart**, San Francisco VA Medical Center  
(415) 221-4810

**Beth Stovall**, Palo Alto VA Medical Center  
(650) 493-5000

**Marlene Carvajal**, San Diego VA Medical Center  
(858) 642-3840

**Maurice Turner**, Fresno VA Medical Center  
(559) 225-6100

**VA Northern CA Health Care System**  
(916) 366-5346

**US Department of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Health Administration  
Women Veterans Program  
Coordinators**

**Ann Thraikill**, Palo Alto Health Care System  
(650) 493-5000 ext. 64153

**Julie Laguardia**, Northern California Health Care  
System, (925) 372-2494

**Adrienne French**, Fresno Health Care System  
(559) 225-6100 ext. 5446

**Cheryl Wenell**, San Francisco Health Care System  
(415) 221-4810 ext. 3956

**Gina Gutierrez-Rawson**, Long Beach Health Care  
System, (562) 826-8000 ext. 2534

**Lisa Roybal**, Loma Linda Health Care System,  
(909) 825-7084 ext. 2985

**Leslie Satz**, San Diego Health Care System  
(619) 400-5087

**Harrier Cagatay**, West Los Angeles Medical  
Center, (310) 268-3487

**Callie Wight**, Sepulveda Ambulatory Care Center,  
(818) 895-9555



**WEBSITES OF INTEREST TO WOMEN VETERANS**

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs -- [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)

CA Department of Veterans Affairs -- [www.calvet.ca.gov](http://www.calvet.ca.gov)

U.S. Department of Defense -- [www.defenselink.mil/faq/pis/mil\\_strength.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/faq/pis/mil_strength.html)

Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services -- [www.dtic.mil/dacowits](http://www.dtic.mil/dacowits)

Women Veterans Health Program -- [www.va.gov/vvhp](http://www.va.gov/vvhp)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Women's Health -- [www.4women.gov](http://www.4women.gov)

National Association of State Women Veterans Coordinators -- [www.naswvc.com](http://www.naswvc.com)

National Personnel Records Center (Military Records -- DD214) -- <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/get-service-records.html>

Military Women Veterans History -- <http://userpages.aurig.com/captbarb/>

National Association of Child Care Resources & Referral Agencies -- <http://www.naccrra.org/>

## Upcoming Events

### FEBRUARY

- Feb. 5, 8, 12 Iraq Veteran Project Focus Groups, San Francisco, Contact Anthony Chandler, 415-252-4787 ext. 350
- Feb. 15 A Special All-Day Workshop with Harriet Katz Zeiner, PhD, [www.thesoldiersproject.org](http://www.thesoldiersproject.org)
- Feb. 17-21 Department of Veterans Affairs, Women Veterans Advisory Committee meeting, Washington D.C.

### MARCH

- Mar. 16-20 Women Military History Week
- Mar. 19 RecruitMilitary Career Fair, 11 am – 3 pm, San Francisco, <http://careerfairs.recruitmilitary.com/cf/183-San-Francisco/candidates/information>
- Mar. 19-21 National American Indian Veterans 3<sup>rd</sup> “Honoring Our Warriors” Conference, Morongo Casino Resort and Spa, Cabazon, CA, [www.naivonline.org](http://www.naivonline.org)
- Mar. 28 WAVES National Region 1 Conference, Oakland, CA, Contact: Lee Williams, 510.323.5466



### SEPTEMBER

- Sept. 11-12 CalVet Women Veterans Conference, Los Angeles

Women and Minority Veterans Affairs  
CA Department of Veterans Affairs  
1227 O Street, Room 300  
Sacramento, CA 95814